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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

later: Mr. MURRAY (Ireland)

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GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENRAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that although there had been some modest recovery in the world economy, one third of the world's population continued to live in debilitating poverty and the gap between rich and poor continued to widen; conditions in Africa were the most critical. Concrete action must be taken to solve the crucial economic and social problems that had been the focus of recent United Nations conferences, and the Organization had an important role to play in that regard.

2. His delegation supported the implementation of achievement-oriented programmes adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. In that regard, he said that the Golda Meir Mount Carmel Institute and Training Centre in Haifa had been organizing training courses for women from developing countries aimed at advancing the role of women in development, for more than three decades. He also noted that a workshop on "Women, Development and Public Policy", sponsored jointly by the Center for International Cooperation in Israel and the United Nations, had been held in Israel earlier that year.

3. Enhancing international cooperation for development was the most fundamental task before the international community. The proposed agenda for development would provide a proper framework for further constructive discussion and elaboration of the main interrelated issues of peace, the economy and the environment. A global development agenda could not be advanced without first laying a solid foundation for global peace and security. His delegation supported further advancement of the reforms of the Economic and Social Council and a coordinated restructuring of the Organization's economic and social activities.

4. Increased attention must be directed to human resource development and to the transfer of technology. Indeed the development of human resources had become the key to Israel's technological expansion and a major feature of its extensive economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Over the past four decades Israel had been involved in very diverse cooperation projects with over 140 countries, and had trained over 50,000 men and women from developing countries. It stood ready to continue to share its know-how with any interested country.

5. Regional cooperation was an essential element of economic progress. A number of historic developments had occurred in the Middle East over the past several years; they included Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza, the peace treaty signed by Jordan and Israel and the recent development, at an economic conference in Casablanca, of an agenda for a new Middle East. A second regional economic conference would take place in October in Amman, and would be followed in November in Barcelona by the first Euro-Mediterranean conference.

6. Mr. OWADA (Japan), speaking of the proposed agenda for development, said that Japan attached particular significance to pursuing both a comprehensive and a differentiated approach to development, establishing a development target, promoting South-South cooperation, and strengthening the functioning of the United Nations system. Member States would need to act in concert to formulate and pursue a new effective strategy for development in response to the structural changes under way in the world.

7. Turning to the question of reform of the United Nations, he said that the specific roles to be pursued by the United Nations should be considered on the basis of the comparative advantages the latter enjoyed. Consideration should also be given to the relevant activities of the United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and donor countries and the manner in which they were coordinated. Only after addressing such factors would it be possible to deal with the United Nations system and formulate proposals for achieving reform. He stressed that the primary purpose of the reform should be to strengthen the system.

8. With respect to South-South cooperation, he welcomed the emerging consensus which recognized such cooperation as a viable mode of international economic and technical cooperation, and regional and interregional cooperation as essential components of such assistance. Differences in development experience based on a disparity in levels of development and on the structure of individual countries suggested possibilities for more innovative forms of cooperation, including triangular arrangements; such as the Rural Development and Resettlement Project currently being implemented in Cambodia by Japan and other countries in the region. Similarly, Japan had already undertaken third-country training programmes with over 20 developing countries. The full potential of South-South cooperation for promoting development had not yet been realized, due to lack of capacity on the part of developing countries and lack of cooperation by traditional donors. Establishment of an effective facility within UNDP could be one way of advancing such activities. Steady and creative implementation of projects would be more effective in promoting such cooperation than a conference.

9. His Government attached a great deal of importance to the triennial policy review of the United Nations operational activities for development and hoped that significant progress would be made in improving coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions. Country Strategy Notes were particularly useful and major donor countries should consider using them in their development assistance.

10. Unlike other countries, Japan had been steadily raising the level of its official development assistance (ODA) as well as its contributions to the United Nations and affiliated agencies. It would be prepared to consider increasing its contributions still further if development activities could be made more effective. Total funding for United Nations development activities already stood at approximately $5 billion, which was roughly equivalent to the total volume of loans extended by the International Development Association (IDA).

11. A serious commitment should be made in order to improve further cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, especially at the field level where such

relations were relatively easy to establish. It would also be feasible for bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to formulate project-specific or sector-specific plans that could be funded by the World Bank.

12. On the issue of women in development, he affirmed that at the recent Conference in Beijing, Japan had committed itself to strengthening policies and programmes related to the Women in Development Initiative (WID); in 1993, Japan had already provided some $600 million for that purpose.

13. Turning to environmental issues, he noted that his Government was continuing to provide extensive assistance to support the conservation of forests in developing countries through its bilateral cooperation programmes. He pledged his Government's continued contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The Commission should retain its function as a forum responsible for formulating comprehensive policy on sustainable development.

14. Finally, he said that follow-up for the recent conferences should be assured through existing agencies rather than the establishment of new ones.

15. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) deplored the fact that over one billion persons continued to live in abject poverty and that millions died each year of hunger and malnutrition while developed societies still clung to consumption patterns that were incompatible with requirements for environmental protection.

16. Reviewing world economic figures, he noted that the 5 per cent increase in GDP anticipated for 1995 in developing countries as a whole concealed wide disparities. While countries in transition had recorded some improvement, the unemployment rate of over 10 per cent in the developed countries remained a source of great concern. While there had been a significant expansion in world trade, the outlook for African countries was not very encouraging as they remained dependent on commodities, notwithstanding some attempts at diversification of non-traditional exports.

17. He noted with satisfaction that in 1994, for the fourth year in a row, developing countries in general and Asia and Latin America in particular had registered a net inflow of financial resources. At the same time, the net flow of resources between such countries and the World Bank and IMF had been negative. Africa as a whole, however, had registered a net outflow, both in general and vis-à-vis those two institutions, a paradoxical situation in view of the fact that the latter had been established to redirect world savings towards developing countries most in need and to promote thereby balanced world economic development. Moreover, official development assistance had fallen sharply from 60.8 per cent to 55.9 per cent.

18. The enormous debt burden of the developing countries continued to block economic and social progress in many countries. The debt relief offered under the Brady Plan was insufficient and the debt crisis remained unsolved for most low-income and certain lower middle-income countries. Moreover, not only were structural adjustment programmes ineffective, but they led to impoverishment of a wider segment of the population and a worsening in social indicators. More

comprehensive debt-relief measures should be put in place and should also be extended to debt owed to multilateral institutions.

19. He expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved by the Commission on Sustainable Development in connection with Agenda 21, and in particular the transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries; and the modification of consumption and production patterns in developed countries. He expressed concern, however, at the fact that developed countries had not been in a position to provide the promised additional resources that were needed for sustainable development.

20. He urged countries to work to ensure that the negotiations on an agenda for development were translated into concrete action in order to halt the increasing marginalization of the role of the United Nations in the economic and financial field. Member States should first find a lasting solution to the Organization's financial crisis so as to enable it to assume the increasing tasks it was being asked to tackle.

21. Mr. Murphy (Ireland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

22. Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) said that the global economy was undergoing rapid change and new forces were emerging that were difficult for States to control. While the outlook for developing countries was less promising than it had been the previous year, some encouragement could be derived from the growing sense of solidarity and community of interests evident among all nations. The recent major world conferences had helped the international community to form a vision of a common future and to make commitments, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities to tackle economic and social problems from a perspective of human-centred development. At the same time, however, environmental and social considerations had been added to the burden of third world countries even though the new and additional financial resources they had been promised had not materialized. Moreover, although the Uruguay Round agreements had considerable potential to expand world trade, their full implementation implied that the developing countries must first achieve equality with their industrial partners.

23. The United Nations was the ideal forum for the elaboration of an agenda for development. It would be disappointing, however, if the negotiations on the agenda were used to attempt to strip the United Nations of its central role in international development cooperation and to dismantle institutions which had made evident contributions to the developing world.

24. Institutional reform was not a goal in itself: the restructuring and revitalization process should aim at strengthening the Organization so that it could better address the concerns of the international community. Regrettably, the developing countries found themselves further marginalized in the decision-making process because of the difficulties in mobilizing resources for the financing of operational activities, a trend which clearly ran counter to the commitments made by the donor countries in General Assembly resolution 48/162.

25. South-South cooperation was among the most promising areas in the development of international trade, and it should be supported by international

mechanisms. The holding of a United Nations conference on the subject would be a valuable opportunity to foster that partnership for the benefit of all.

26. Mr. MWAKAWAGO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that while the developed world saw economic globalization and liberalization as offering great opportunities for growth and development, African countries had different views, since their chances of reaping potential benefits were slim, while the chances of their further marginalization in the world economy were high.

27. The profound economic reforms, undertaken by most of the least developed countries in Africa in an effort to minimize the chances of marginalization had not produced the expected results. Therefore, Tanzania was of the view that the Bretton Woods institutions should adopt a more flexible and realistic approach, basing reform measures on development strategies prepared by the recipient country in accordance with its own priorities. Adequate levels of external finance were also essential in order to maintain momentum. The recent drought in southern Africa had seriously affected agriculture, yet the many action programmes designed to combat the problem would be ineffective unless countries like Tanzania were assisted in acquiring the knowledge and skills to combat desertification and drought, through intensification of the transfer of technology.

28. Despite programmes of debt relief and restructuring, the external debt crisis had not yet ended. In fact, the debt of the least developed countries in particular was expected to rise still further. The restoration of macroeconomic stability and growth would require additional refinancing arrangements to help those countries meet their current debt-service obligations. Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries was the only way to avoid their further marginalization in the world economy. In order to achieve that goal, there was a critical need to strengthen the institutional capacities of developing countries and to integrate that mechanism fully into national policies.

29. In order to pursue the articulation of an agenda for development, the role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be strengthened. Furthermore, the commitment of the international community to assist developing countries must be reflected in increased support to such international institutions as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which had proven track records in that area.

30. Mr. GORITA (Romania) said that the increased rate of growth in the global economy during the past year, particularly in countries with economies in transition, was an encouraging sign that the macroeconomic policies adopted in conjunction with social policies and other measures intended to support initiative, liberalization and decentralization were beginning to show results. He paid tribute to the constant support to countries in transition offered by the United Nations system.

31. Unfortunately, conditions in the least developed countries, particularly in Africa, remained critical, and support to those countries should be the priority

area of future action. Thus, his delegation attached great importance to the adoption of an agenda for development during the current General Assembly session. That document should strike a balance between the conceptual aspects of development and specific action to support the process. Of similar importance to the future of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields was the ongoing process of reflection begun during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on coordination of follow-up to international conferences. A common thread in those discussions was the awareness of the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council. Better coordination would enhance the efficiency of all activities in that field. An exhaustive inventory of existing institutional resources would be essential to an accurate evaluation of their current status. The level at which such decisions were taken should also be evaluated, and the possibility of holding segments at the ministerial level for other functional commissions should be considered.

32. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that, although current economic circumstances had never been more favourable to development and although the right to development had been recognized as a basic human right, flows of official development assistance had decreased significantly over the past two years.

33. With the completion of the Uruguay Round, the World Trade Organization had been established to implement rule-based international trade. It was a matter of great concern, however, that the management of the global economy might be left to market forces alone, since that could intensify existing imbalances and inequities and further marginalize the most vulnerable economies. The role of UNCTAD must, therefore, be re-emphasized.

34. The obstacles to access to financial resources for developing countries were multiplying, and concessional finance was becoming increasingly scarce. Closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions was urgently needed in order to broaden the base for multilateral funding.

35. It was encouraging to note that, during its transition to democratic government, Bangladesh had achieved some tangible success. In addition to structural reforms, investment had been redirected to human resource development and poverty alleviation - the social sector currently represented over 30 per cent of annual development outlay. While increased external finance was crucial to support the reform programmes and transition to a stable democracy, there had been a sharp decline in official development assistance and multilateral aid. His Government, therefore, welcomed the commitments of the leaders of the seven major industrialized countries to support international institutions and to ensure the prosperity of the developing world.

36. Mr. PHANIT (Thailand) noted that global economic recovery was well under way. At the same time, because of the rapid transformation of international economic and financial activities, important changes were taking place at the global, regional and national level, and the impact of the changes being instituted at the national level was sending shock waves through national political and social systems.

37. The United Nations could assist in nurturing a smooth transition at all three levels, at the same time ensuring that sustainable human development remained achievable. It could play an intermediary role by complementing the efforts of national Governments and the private sector to help improve the necessary economic and social infrastructure and human resources development in the developing and least developed countries so as to help with their integration into the world economy. Thus, while agreeing with the view that the United Nations should be restructured and reformed, his delegation believed that any such reform should take into account the ongoing development projects and country programmes of action of the developing countries.

38. While some Member States viewed the Organization as an instrument serving their own national policies, and focused on questions of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, others saw it as the only viable global organization, but believed that its resources could be better utilized to provide what was required for national development. Both requirements could be met provided the necessary political will existed. That resources at the disposal of the United Nations could be better utilized was evidenced by the fact that official development assistance had been in decline, even though there was supposed to be a "peace dividend" following the cold war. The decline had come at a time when developing countries were faced with the challenge of adapting the strategy of sustainable development. The threats facing nations were no longer simply ideological or military, but were of a long-term nature and affected mankind as a whole. The place to begin forging a global alliance to overcome those threats was the United Nations.

39. His country had approached sustainable development with a three-pronged strategy involving commitment to domestic reform, regional economic and technical cooperation and international trade. It had implemented policies on economic liberalization, privatization, the upgrading of the economic infrastructure, environmental conservation, increased education and improved health-care services. It had worked for mutual interest with its neighbours, and was well placed to serve as a land bridge for its immediate neighbours. It had also been engaged in bilateral cooperation through the Thai International Cooperation Programme, most of whose resources had been allocated to Thailand's immediate neighbours. It was unfortunate that internationally, barriers to free and fair trading still existed. More developed countries should refrain from adopting unilateral and arbitrary measures, including protectionism in disguise, in such fields as agriculture, textiles and light manufacturing. There, too, the United Nations institutions, and the specialized agencies, could represent the interests and concerns of all involved. A freer global trading environment and regional cooperation were ultimately the key to sustaining mutual economic growth in the future.

40. Mr. OUATTARA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the international economy could not tolerate a world in which some countries forged ahead, achieving the conditions of sustained growth, while the rest dragged themselves along, burdened by the difficulties of a hostile economic environment.

41. In order to reverse the trend towards declining economies, the African States believed that three things were needed. First, they must remain the architects of their own development. Most, if not all, were proceeding to adopt

political and economic reforms, both to enable their peoples to run their own lives in a context of political pluralism and to achieve economic liberalization through such reforms as privatization and new investment codes. Second, the continent's natural and human resources should be adequate to give a new impetus to development. In that regard, Africa was on the way to reversing the decline in its development, as some examples of economic success showed. The third requirement was that national efforts should be underpinned by the international community. His delegation would therefore be glad to join with both developing and developed countries in establishing a new form of international economic cooperation, taking into account the interdependence of economies and the political will to enter into a new partnership for development based on universal solidarity.

42. Mr. HUDYMA (Ukraine) said that unless States could overcome their domestic problems, long-term sustainable development could not be ensured. He was glad that the problems of States with economies in transition had been acknowledged and hoped that specific action to integrate such economies into the world economic system would be taken at the current session.

43. Ukraine had embarked on fundamental economic reform, in order to create a socially orientated market economy, adopting an open and consistent foreign policy and reforming the system of division of powers. Unlike most post-Soviet countries, it had managed to find a way out of its constitutional impasse without violent collisions. Difficulties remained, however. Of particular importance was the establishment of an effective system of social protection. In that connection, Ukraine was particularly interested in assistance in integrating its economy with the world economy through the United Nations, although it did not aim to compete with the least developed countries for the resources of the United Nations development system.

44. The question of Chernobyl was still a priority in his country. Special activities were planned for 1996, to mark the tenth anniversary of the disaster. The decommissioning of malfunctioning and outdated industrial nuclear facilities - and nuclear safety problems in general - were critical not only for Ukraine, however. A practical solution must be found to the whole set of issues related to the disaster, and the sooner money was invested in such a solution the better. Ukraine would welcome participation by other countries in establishing an international scientific and technological centre in Chernobyl.

45. Ukraine continued to suffer considerable financial loss because of its implementation of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and was still not being compensated from other sources. The specific measures proposed by the President of Ukraine to mitigate the negative economic consequences for States affected by the implementation of sanctions, together with those outlined in General Assembly resolution 48/210, would help to resolve the problem.

46. Meanwhile, he looked forward to the strengthening of United Nations operational activities. He applauded the work of the UNDP office in Kiev and hoped that organizational reforms would give an impetus to promoting United Nations activities in the eastern European region. The efforts of all States to achieve consensus on the agenda for development should be directed at

establishing a strict system of priorities, orientated towards practical results. There should be greater coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The role of the Economic and Social Council should also be enhanced and its structure revised.

47. Mr. MUEGGE (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that while new and unprecedented demands had been thrust upon the United Nations system, the resources had not risen at the same pace. Recognizing the need to adjust to a dramatically different world, UNIDO had initiated a reform programme already in 1993, refocusing its activities and creating a less hierarchical and more flexible structure. The result was a more innovative and demand-orientated organization which focused on key areas relating to the current global environment.

48. A major concern for the international community was the uneven pace of development in Africa. UNIDO attached particular importance to the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa. In cooperation with the Government of Botswana, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa, it had organized the first private sector forum in Gaberone. The forum had been attended by some 350 delegates and had adopted recommendations on the creation of an enabling environment for private sector development and promotion, on the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements for the performance of the African industrial sector, on the mobilization of financial resources for private sector development and on regional cooperation. It had also adopted a mechanism for close follow-up action.

49. He had mentioned the forum because it was proof of the changes that had occurred in UNIDO. It was significant that the private sector had been involved in a dialogue that had been conducted in parallel with a high-level intergovernmental meeting on industrial policies in Africa. The forum was, however, but one of many activities carried out under the aegis of the Decade. Every effort had been made, at the same time, to allocate scarce resources in an efficient manner. For example, funds had recently been allocated to a pilot-scale project to be implemented together with UNCTAD to assess the effect of the Uruguay Round agreements on the export supply capabilities of manufacturing industries in selected African countries. UNIDO hoped in that way to assist the developing countries in their endeavours to compete in the global trade arena and to benefit from trade liberalization.

50. Summing up the main challenges to international development cooperation, he said that sustainable social progress could be achieved only through the development of the productive sectors, which was best attained through industrial development. The United Nations system should focus its programmes and structures on the new conditions and constraints existing in developing countries and those in transition. That would require further specialization on the part of the various agencies and effective interaction between them, as well as with bilateral agencies and regional and national bodies. That was where UNIDO's main role lay. The evolution of the political, social and economic scene had, indeed, lent renewed relevance to its mandate and functions.

51. Mr. AGONA (Uganda), said that although many developing countries, including his own, had undertaken courageous economic and political reforms in an effort to create favourable conditions for both domestic and foreign investment, few African countries had registered any growth and development, and even that had been modest. Poverty was still pervasive, disease rampant, and unemployment commonplace. There was, therefore, a need for enhanced international cooperation for development.

52. Clear attempts were being made to implement the programmes of action resulting from the major United Nations development-related conferences without due regard to the priorities of developing countries. A balance must be maintained in the follow-up to the outcome of international conferences. Uganda, for its part, would continue to honour its commitment under the various conferences. High priority should continue to be given to financing for development and South-South cooperation. Progress had been made in the discussions on an agenda for development which should be used by the international community as a basis for building future development cooperation. Regarding the development of Africa and the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council at the end of the Council's high-level segment could serve as a reference point for continued debate and possible action.

53. The general debate in the Second Committee should be maintained as it afforded small delegations an invaluable opportunity to put on record at once and with economy, their concerns and aspirations.

54. Mr. KIM Su Man (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that despite the efforts by the United Nations to promote development, the world economy continued to be dominated by a few developed countries and characterized by an ever-growing marginalization of developing countries. All States must therefore recognize the urgency of resolving development issues and overcome the challenges threatening humankind on the basis of shared responsibility.

55. The increasingly interdependent world economy should be based on equitable international economic relations beneficial to both developed and developing countries. Consequently, the two groups of countries should establish a partnership in promoting international cooperation for development and resolve development-related issues through genuine dialogue.

56. Creditor countries and international financial institutions should take innovative measures to resolve the external debt problem once and for all. Such measures should include the cancellation and reduction of the external debt of developing countries, the extension of their debt repayment schedules and the freezing of their debt interests.

57. His delegation fully supported the initiative to convene a United Nations conference on South-South cooperation not later than 1997 and hoped that the current session would give serious consideration to that matter. While the United Nations should give priority to development and play a central role in promoting international cooperation for development, it should not tolerate attempts to use development as a pretext to infringe upon sovereignty and

interfere in internal affairs. Efforts should be made to mobilize more resources for development.

58. Finally, he said that the proposed agenda for development should contain practical and action-oriented measures for enhancing the functions and goals of the United Nations in the field of development.

59. Mr. QATIL (Afghanistan) said that although his country's economic infrastructure had been destroyed, the international community had been reluctant to provide it with development and reconstruction assistance. Nor had the needy population received sufficient humanitarian assistance. International financial institutions should break their unjustifiable silence on the needs of Afghanistan and give the Government the necessary tools to respond to the requirements of a country which had been destroyed because of its determination to fight for the cause of democracy, human rights and social justice.

60. Afghanistan needed assistance to rehabilitate and revive its agricultural sector as well as assistance in de-mining in order to facilitate access to vital arable land. In that connection, the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations, should continue to provide support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country.

61. Despite numerous calls by his Government and improved security in Kabul, the United Nations still did not have an office there. Instead, the Organization provided most of its funds for the country's reconstruction and economic development through non-governmental organizations, the majority of which remained outside the country. Non-governmental organizations operating in the country should coordinate their activities with the ministry of planning and other sectoral ministries.

62. Although the Afghan and Pakistani Governments had signed an agreement on transit trade in 1965, the Government of Pakistan had continued to create major obstacles for Afghan transit trade and was illegally and unjustifiably holding and charging demurrages for Afghan goods in the port city of Karachi.

63. Mr. RAZA (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he regretted the reference to his country made by the representative of Afghanistan. His Government, which had honoured its agreements relating to the transit of goods, had always endeavoured to make maximum facilities available to the Afghan Government and therefore rejected any charge that it was impeding the transit of goods to Afghanistan. Pakistan, however, was still open to all suggestions and possible cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan on that issue.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.